

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-10 (Canceled).

Claim 11 (New): A hall-effect plasma thruster having a longitudinal axis substantially parallel to a thrust direction defining an upstream portion and a downstream portion, and comprising:

a primary ionization and acceleration channel made of a refractory material surrounded by two circular cylindrical poles, the channel being open at its upstream end;

an annular gas-dispensing anode receiving gas from gas-distribution lines and equipped with passages for admitting the gas into the channel, the annular anode being placed inside of the channel in an upstream portion of the channel;

at least one hollow cathode arranged outside the channel, adjacent thereto;

a magnetic circuit comprising upstream polar ends for creating a radial magnetic field in an upstream portion of the channel between the polar parts, the circuit including a downstream plate, from which protrude, upstream and parallel to the longitudinal axis, a central arm situated at a center of the channel, two circular cylindrical poles on both sides of the channel, and peripheral arms situated on an exterior of the channel and adjacent thereto, wherein at least one of the arms of the magnetic circuit comprises a permanent magnet.

Claim 12 (New): A plasma thruster as claimed in Claim 11, wherein a first portion of the arms of the magnetic circuit comprises a permanent magnet, and wherein a second portion of the arms of the magnetic circuit does not comprise permanent magnets.

Claim 13 (New): A plasma thruster as claimed in Claim 11, wherein each arm of the magnetic circuit comprising a permanent magnet includes a downstream portion in contact with the downstream plate, an upstream portion holding a magnetic pole, and a central portion adjacent to the downstream portion and to the upstream portion including the permanent magnet.

Claim 14 (New): A plasma thruster as claimed in Claim 12, wherein each arm of the magnetic circuit comprising a permanent magnet includes a downstream portion in contact with the downstream plate, an upstream portion holding a magnetic pole, and a central portion adjacent to the downstream portion and to the upstream portion including the permanent magnet.

Claim 15 (New): A plasma thruster as claimed in Claim 13, further comprising a jacket present on each arm of the magnetic circuit comprising a permanent magnet.

Claim 16 (New): A plasma thruster as claimed in Claim 11, further comprising a field coil wound around arms not comprising permanent magnets.

Claim 17 (New): A plasma thruster as claimed in Claim 14, further comprising a field coil wound around arms not comprising permanent magnets.

Claim 18 (New): A plasma thruster as claimed in Claim 11, wherein no field coil is engaged around the arms of the magnetic circuit comprising a permanent magnet.

Claim 19 (New): A plasma thruster as claimed in Claim 11, wherein the peripheral arms are arranged in rotational symmetry around the longitudinal axis.

Claim 20 (New): A plasma thruster as claimed in Claim 11, wherein the peripheral arms each comprise a permanent magnet, wherein the central arm is made of a magnetic material only, and wherein a field coil is engaged around the central arm.

Claim 21 (New): A plasma thruster as claimed in Claim 11, wherein the central arm comprises a permanent magnet, wherein the peripheral arms are made of a magnetic material only, and wherein a field coil is engaged around the central arm.

Claim 22 (New): A plasma thruster as claimed in Claim 11, wherein the central arm comprises a permanent magnet, and wherein all of the peripheral arms comprise a permanent magnet.